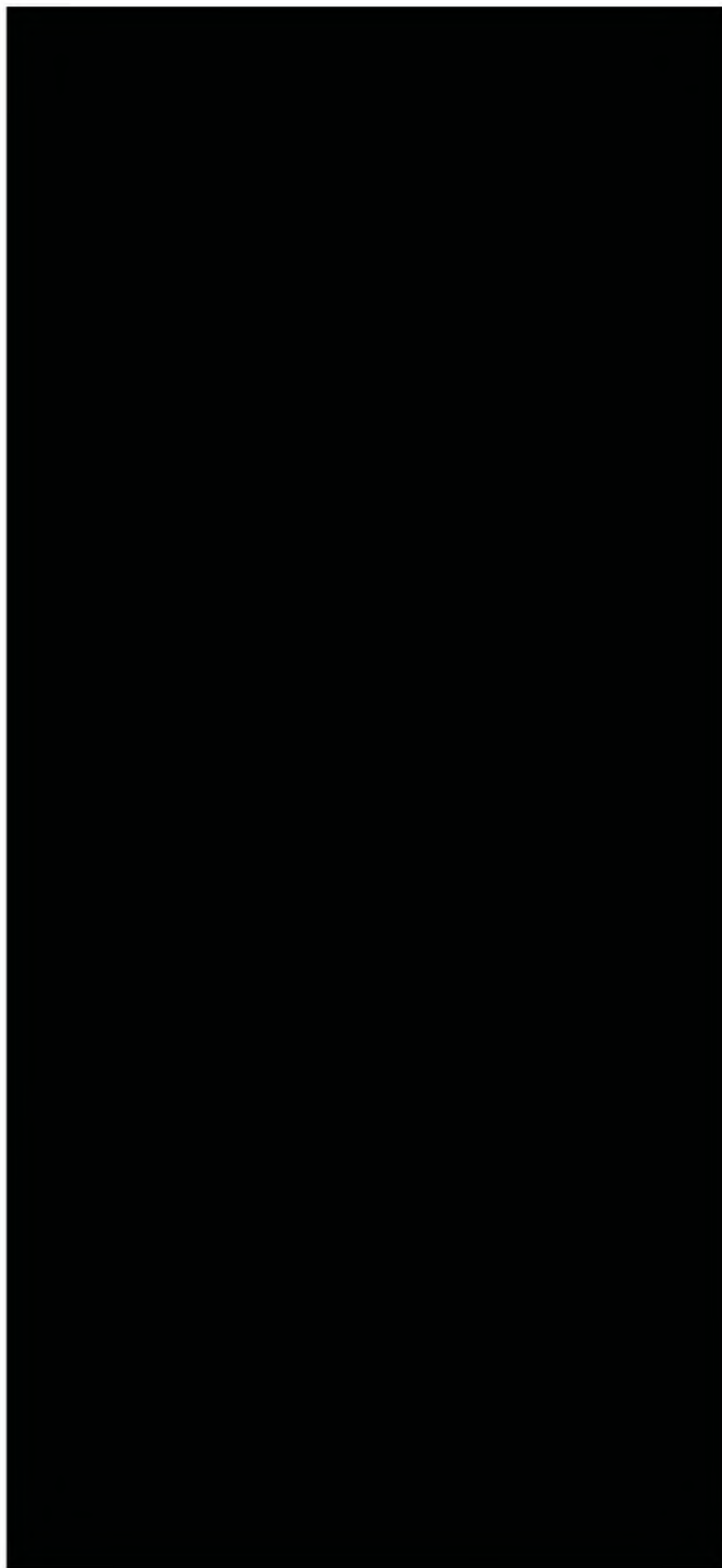


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RUSH SANDAL CH'EN

This painting of the eccentric Chinese monk Ch'en P'u-hsieh (Chin Hsai, 780?-877?) is inscribed with a poem by Ikkyū Sōjun (1394-1481), a famous Japanese priest of the Rinzai tradition. The painting itself is unsigned, but it has been attributed by one authority on stylistic grounds to Ikkyū as well. Although this is a comparatively subdued example of Ikkyū's calligraphy (which in some pieces attains a wild, almost fierce quality), it still shows the bold, untrammelled style which gives his work its unmistakable individuality. The painting, if indeed it is by Ikkyū, would have to rank with his finest.

The poem above the picture, which is, incidentally, not to be found in Ikkyū's poetry collection, the *Kyōmashū* ("Crazy Cloud Collection"), may be rendered as follows:

*Brick tea and watery gruel appeasing his empty belly,
Amid the withering rushes the pleasures of autumn deepen.
Regretting bitterly the spiritual debilitation of younger monks,
A thin robe makes greater the joy of the predawn frost.*

The colophon reads: "A picture of Rush Sandal Ch'en. Inscribed with deep reverence by Tōkai [Sō] jun Ikkyū, seventh in Hsu-t'ang's line."

Ch'en Tsun-yu (Chin Sōshaku), the subject of Ikkyū's praise, also known as Ch'en Mu-chou (Chin Bokushū), was a disciple of the Zen master Huang-po Hsi-yun (Ōbaku Kōin). He was also closely associated with another of Huang-po's disciples, Lin-chi I-hsuan (Rinzai Gigen). The well-known episode in which, in his nineties, he enlightened the young Yun-men (Unmon) by breaking his leg for him, is characteristic of his sharp, severe teaching style. While scorning all personal fame and honor and caring for his aged mother, he eked out an existence by making sandals out of rush leaves, which he placed secretly on roads and in other places. This later became known, hence his nickname, Ch'en P'u-hsieh, "Rush Sandal Ch'en." All of this made him a figure after Ikkyū's heart. Ikkyū's own temperament was characterized by an iconoclasm that is almost absolute, and eccentric and at times even erratic behavior. It is well summed up in the sobriquet "Crazy Cloud" (*Kyōmō*), which he bestowed on himself.

The words "seventh in Hsu-t'ang's line," which appear often in colophons accompanying Ikkyū's poetical inscriptions, convey his conviction of the unsullied purity of his Zen—the lineage of Daitō Kokushi, Daitō Kokushi, and Daitō's Chinese master Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu (Kido Chigu, 1185-1269).